



Dartmoor
National Park Authority
Business Plan
2026/27

Introduction

This business plan sets out our ambition to deliver for Dartmoor in 2026/27.

This is an important year of change for the authority. We celebrate the 75th anniversary of Dartmoor National Park and rightly look back at all the successes of those years. The principles that led to the creation of our national parks remain as important today as they did at their formation. But we must also look forward.

Six principles remain at the core of our business plan:

- Better for Nature and Climate
- Better for Cultural Heritage
- Better for Farming and Forestry
- Better for People
- Better for Communities and Business
- Be an excellent organisation

The government's funding settlement for the authority remains very challenging, but we do expect to receive new capital funding alongside the traditional grant funding and existing locally raised revenue.

A key focus for the year is the critical work with people and communities across the moor and beyond to shape our new Partnership Plan. That plan will set our focus for the coming years and encapsulate how we work going forward. As the climate and our understanding of the natural environment change, Dartmoor and the way it is managed must adapt.

We will develop robust proposals to utilise new capital funding for the benefit of Dartmoor and the authority and seek to secure medium term stability where possible.

We also set out our ambition to ensure that young people and volunteers are better engaged in the work of the national park and have more opportunity to participate in the work of the authority.

This business plan is the first of a new period for the authority and delivering it will be the first step in securing a positive and sustainable future for Dartmoor, for people who live and work here, and for those who visit from near and far to enjoy its special qualities.



William Dracup
Chair



Tom Surrey
Chief Executive

Dartmoor National Park Authority

The Dartmoor National Park Authority was established under the provisions of the Environment Act 1995 as an independent body within the framework of local government.

Our role is clearly defined by Parliament through two statutory purposes to:

- conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park;
- promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the area by the public.

These purposes are of equal weight unless there is an irreconcilable conflict between the two, in which case, priority is given to the first purpose to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park.

In pursuing the two statutory purposes, we are also required to:

- seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park.

The National Park Authority is governed by 19 Members appointed via different routes:

- by the Secretary of State to reflect the national interest
- by constituent authorities (Devon County Council, South Hams District Council, Teignbridge District Council and West Devon Borough Council).
- via parish council elections and subsequent appointment by the Secretary of State.

We are a small organisation and the majority of our work is undertaken in partnership with others in order to achieve the best outcomes for Dartmoor National Park, the people who live and work here and those who visit this special place. Our partners range from: public authorities to private individuals; from commercial businesses to community groups.

The Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023 (section 245) introduced a new duty on 'relevant authorities' to 'seek to further' the statutory purposes of national parks in the exercise of their functions. This new duty is active rather passive – it requires relevant authorities to take appropriate, reasonable and proportionate steps to further national park purposes. Importantly, it means such authorities should be considering the vision, ambitions and actions of the relevant National Park Management Plan (or Partnership Plan) – see next section.

To learn more about our work visit: dartmoor.gov.uk



Dartmoor Partnership Plan

The Dartmoor Partnership Plan (formerly known as the National Park Management Plan) is the most important document for the National Park. It sets out a vision for the National Park and specific objectives for the next five to ten years. The Partnership Plan is produced in partnership with the Authority playing a key role in facilitating the partnership and leading the process. The vision for Dartmoor (see below) is ambitious: it combines national and local priorities.

This Business Plan identifies key actions that we will lead on in support of the Partnership Plan (see next section).

Vision for Dartmoor National Park 2045

Dartmoor National Park is an extraordinary landscape: shaped by nature and humans over time; steeped in history but always changing; one of Britain's finest. It has the power to inspire and enrich lives.

Our Vision is to make Dartmoor better for future generations: climate resilient, nature rich, beautiful, connected to the past and looking to the future; a place where people of all ages and backgrounds can live, work or visit. A place that is loved, cherished and cared for.

It will be:

Alive with nature

Networks of healthy habitats that are home to many different plants, insects and animals create a more resilient natural environment connected within and across the boundary of the National Park. Some areas feel wilder as nature is enhanced and allowed to take its course.

Celebrated and enhanced

Dartmoor's natural beauty and rich cultural heritage is better understood, valued and looked after.

A warm welcome for all

Enriching people's lives, reaching out to people from all backgrounds, connecting them with this special place. Transformative experiences will inspire people to care for the National Park.

A great place to live and work

People of all ages can enjoy living and working in low carbon, flourishing communities that are connected physically and digitally. Farming and forestry businesses play a key role in delivering a high-quality environment and local products alongside a range of other public benefits.

Carbon negative

Dartmoor's peatlands, soils and woodlands will store significantly more carbon. Responding to climate change will be embedded in our way of life, making the best use of natural resources and reducing carbon emissions.

Everyone will come together to deliver this Vision for Dartmoor; make choices that balance the needs of people and place; embrace positive change; and inspire the next generation to help shape its future.

This plan sets out how we will work together over the next five years towards the vision. This National Park Partnership Plan for Dartmoor will be reviewed and updated every five years.

In order to deliver the vision, the Partnership Plan focuses on seven themes:

- A Better Response to Climate Change
- Better for the Next Generation
- Better for Nature and Natural Beauty
- Better for Cultural Heritage
- Better for People
- Better for Farming and Forestry
- Better for Businesses and Communities

These themes provide a structure for the Authority's Business Plan (see next section) which, in large part, outlines how the actions and services provided by the Authority will help deliver the vision for Dartmoor.

A key action in our 2026/27 Business Plan is to complete a review of the current Partnership Plan and to publish a revised Plan in 2027.

To learn more about the Dartmoor Partnership Plan visit: [Partnership Plan | Dartmoor](#)

The Business Plan

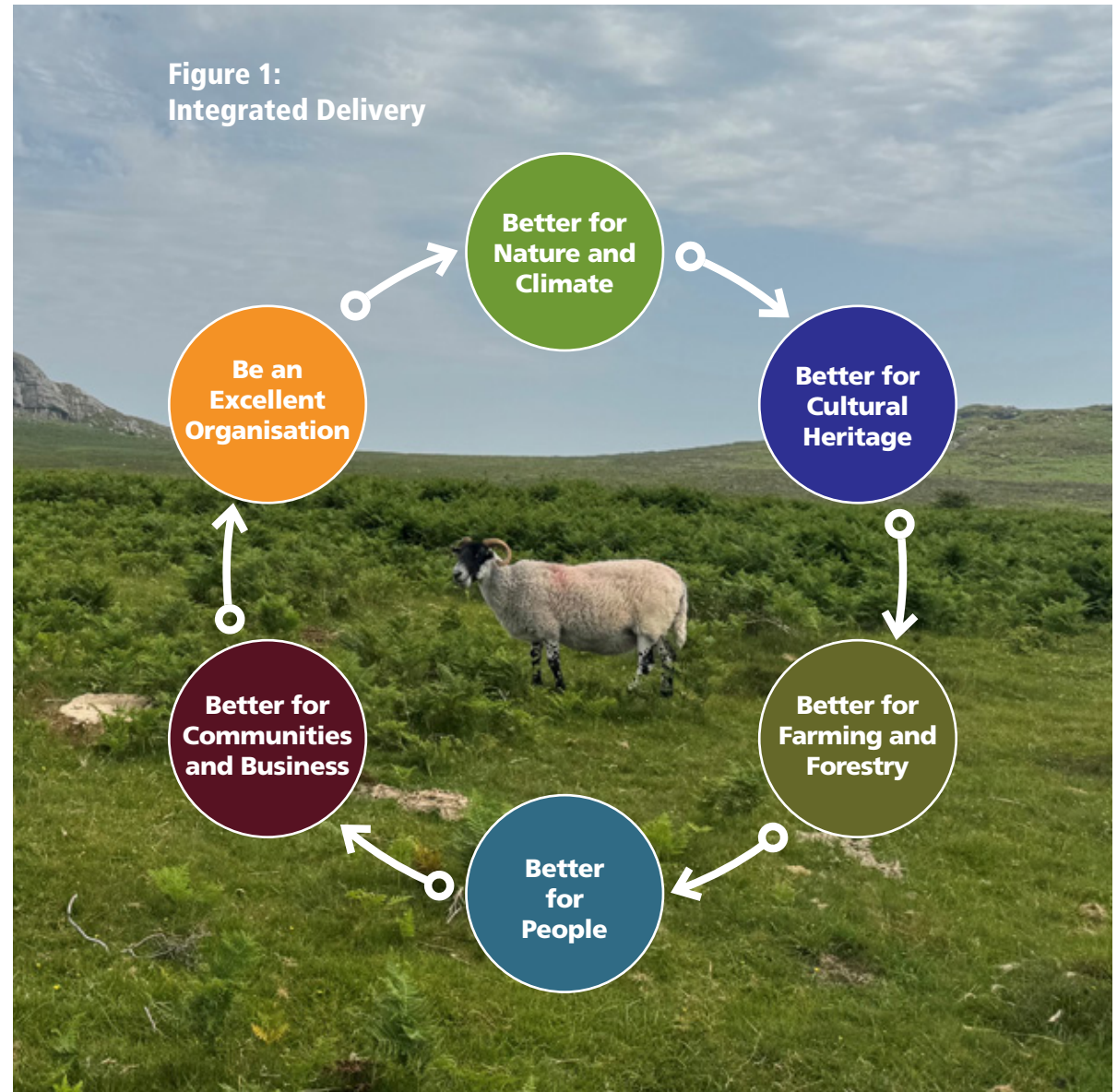
Our Business Plan is structured around six priorities:

- **Better for Nature and Climate**
- **Better for Cultural Heritage**
- **Better for Farming and Forestry**
- **Better for People**
- **Better for Communities and Business**
- **Be an excellent organisation**

Priorities 1 to 5 relate directly to the Dartmoor Partnership Plan (see above). The Partnership Plan themes around climate and next generation are woven into our work under all 6 priorities. Priority 6 reflects our desire to be an effective organisation providing an excellent level of service.

In developing our priorities we consider the agreed vision and actions in the Dartmoor Partnership Plan, statutory targets and Government policies (e.g. Environment Act targets and the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework) and wider local priorities (e.g. Devon Carbon Plan and the corporate plans for constituent authorities).

The priorities are linked - see figure 1. Our overall goal is integrated delivery: to ensure action on one priority considers and delivers, wherever possible, across all themes and helps Dartmoor become carbon neutral.



Key Actions for 2026/27

Table 1 highlights, for each priority, our ambition, the key actions we will undertake in 2026/27 to help deliver the ambition and the headline outcomes or impact that we seek. The ambitions relate to the Dartmoor Partnership Plan. Whilst we up-date our Business Plan on an annual basis most of our work programmes (and the key actions) span more than one financial year.

The key actions do not encompass all of the work that we undertake, nor do they relate to all of our services; rather, they reflect, as the name suggests the key actions which will help deliver our priorities and contribute to delivery of the vision and ambition in the Dartmoor Partnership Plan.

As well as identifying key actions to deliver our priorities and contribute to the vision for Dartmoor; the Business Plan sets out:

- **Performance targets for our key services**
- **The funding available to deliver our services and key actions**



Better for Nature and Climate

Ambition:

Networks of healthy habitats that are home to many different plants, insects and animals create a more resilient natural environment, at a landscape-scale, connected within and across the boundary of the National Park. Some areas feel wilder as nature is enhanced and allowed to take its course. Dartmoor's peatlands, soils and woodlands will store significantly more carbon. Responding to climate change will be embedded in our way of life.

Key actions in 2026/27 to help deliver our ambition:

- Completion of 250ha. of peatland restoration by March 2027 through engagement with South West Peatland Partnership. Secure continued funding for peatland restoration beyond March 2027.
- Complete mapping of apportioned Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework targets and opportunities for 30x30 for Dartmoor in conjunction with Dartmoor Land Use Management Group, Landscape Recovery Programmes and other initiatives.
- Dartmoor Headwaters programme - use of natural flood management measures within key catchments that reduce the risk of flooding, improve hydrological systems and deliver other public benefits in a way that supports local communities and the 'circular economy'. Delivery of natural flood management projects across eight catchments.
- Submit the Walkham Landscape Recovery project for assessment; support Central Dartmoor and East Dartmoor Landscape Recovery projects through assessment and (subject to approval) into delivery; and scope other opportunities for further funding (including potential new Landscape Recovery projects).
- Identify and continue to support key species through targeted actions including strategies and reintroduction programmes, for example, the Curlew Recovery project and re-introduction of Pine Martens.

Outcomes sought:

- Halt the decline in species populations by 2030 and then increase populations by at least 10% to exceed 2022 levels by 2042.
- Functioning catchments that reduce the risk of flooding and improve water quality: improved flood resilience to over 600 properties, whilst delivering over 240 ha. of improved habitats by 2033.
- At least 30% of Dartmoor actively managed for nature by 2030 (based on national criteria).
- Reach Protected Landscapes Target and Outcomes Target (one) for Wildlife Rich Habitats outside protected sites (from a 2022 baseline) of 7,500 ha. by 2042.
- Protected Landscapes Target and Outcomes Target - Continuing favourable management of all existing priority habitat already in favourable condition outside of SSSIs (from a 2022 baseline) and increasing to include all newly restored or created habitat through agri-environment schemes by 2042.
- A carbon negative National Park by 2050 (assessed against 2022 baseline).
- To reach Protected Landscapes Target and Outcomes Target for restoring 8,000 ha. of peat by 2050.

Better for Cultural Heritage

Ambition:

Dartmoor’s cultural heritage and historic environment is protected, well managed and in good condition. The significance of the historic environment will be understood by both those living and working on Dartmoor and by visitors. Dartmoor’s rich historic environment will be actively researched and celebrated.

Key actions in 2026/27 to help deliver our ambition:

- Promotion and celebration of the work and finds at Cut Hill – in line with celebrating 75 years of Dartmoor National Park’s designation.
- Work with partners to reduce number of at-risk monuments on Dartmoor, in line with Target 10 of the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework - “Decrease the number of nationally designated heritage assets at risk in Protected Landscapes”.
- Deliver one community archaeological dig.
- Deliver at least six volunteer-based events.
- Identify, audit and list the number of projects that DNPA archaeologist’s support.

Outcomes sought:

- Reduce the number of nationally designated heritage assets at risk in the National Park by at least six per cent (12) by 2027.
- Increase the number of trained and active archaeological volunteers by 20 per cent by 2027, with a focus on hard-to-reach groups.
- Dartmoor’s cultural heritage is better understood and appreciated – through volunteer-based events and community digs that celebrate Dartmoor’s cultural heritage.
- Ensuring the archaeology team continue to facilitate nature-based projects and advocate for integrated management.



Better for Farming and Forestry

Ambition:

Farming and forestry systems that sustain a resilient and thriving natural environment, store and sequester carbon, produce healthy food, high quality fibre and other products, are economically viable and deliver a wide range of public goods.

Key actions in 2026/27 to help deliver our ambition:

- Deliver the 'Healthy Livestock' project and ensure learning is disseminated and embedded in Landscape Recovery projects on Dartmoor.
- Deliver the Farming in Protected Landscape Programme on Dartmoor.
- Assist farmers with the transition to the new Environmental Land Management schemes and seek to ensure that these schemes are relevant to Dartmoor and build on practical experience.
- In line with the Partnership Plan and the Protected Landscapes Target and Outcomes Framework, reinvigorate the woodland group and ensure accurate mapping of all woodland and woodland opportunities across Dartmoor.
- To allocate all Farming in Protected Landscape (FiPL) monies within year, deliver Partnership Plan actions/targets and celebrate FiPL with land managers, recipients and partners including Defra.

Outcomes sought:

- Ensure at least 65% of farmers/land managers adopt nature friendly farming on their land by 2030 (PLTOF Target Five).
- To reach Protected Landscapes Target and Outcomes Target for increased tree canopy and woodland cover (combined) (from 2022 baseline) of 2,900 ha. by 2050.



Better for People

Ambition:

Dartmoor provides a warm welcome to people from all backgrounds: enriching people's lives and connecting them with this special place. Transformative experiences will inspire people to care for the National Park. All users will be responsible: caring for the place, respecting other users and local communities.

Key actions in 2026/27 to help deliver our ambition:

- Develop and implement a Visitor Management Plan for 2026 season and deliver the 'Dartmoor National Park Marshals' programme.
- Undertake a visitor survey through our visitor centres – building on data from 2025.
- Manage 730 kilometres of public rights of way and 38,500 ha of access land on Dartmoor with a focus on a net reduction of 'outstanding maintenance issues' by 10 per cent per annum.
- Implement an Active Travel Plan for Dartmoor with a range of costed schemes for improving connectivity for local communities and visitors.
- Review visitor management and potentially re-commence the review of the National Park Byelaws.

Outcomes sought:

- Improve and promote accessibility to, and engagement with, Dartmoor National Park for all; by March 2027:
 - 20 'Miles without Stiles' routes. A further five in 2026/27.
 - 90 per cent of the Public Rights of Way network is classed as easy to use.
- Every visitor appreciates the National Park and has an enjoyable experience: over 90% of visitors agree that Dartmoor is well conserved.
- Reduced anti-social behaviour (as recorded by the National Park Rangers through the Ranger App).
- Welcome more than 100,000 visitors to our National Park Visitor Centres.



Better for Communities and Business

Ambition:

People of all ages can enjoy living and working in low carbon, flourishing communities that are connected physically and digitally. Dartmoor's communities are thriving and engaged in caring for the National Park.

Key actions in 2026/27 to help deliver our ambition:

- Develop the Authority's use of volunteers across all key service areas.
- Support, through our role as the local planning authority, the delivery of affordable homes for local people and create and protect key infrastructure and community facilities.
- Develop, in partnership with key stakeholders a Dartmoor Food Strategy and associated action plan.

Outcomes sought:

- Over 4,000 volunteer days organised or supported by the National Park Authority per annum.
- 65 new housing units per annum.



Be an Excellent Organisation

Ambition:

A motivated, well-resourced organisation working effectively and efficiently to deliver key services and, with partners, to deliver National Park purposes and the vision in the Dartmoor Partnership Plan.

Key actions in 2026/27 to help deliver our ambition:

- Working with the Partnership Board, conclude the review of the Dartmoor Partnership Plan and establish a robust monitoring strategy to track and evaluate progress throughout the lifetime of the plan.
- Deliver a capital investment programme aimed at income generation.
- Implement key actions for the Authority's Climate Action Plan with the aim of reducing our carbon footprint.
- Oversee delivery of Dartmoor's Dynamic Landscapes ensuring key actions are complete and projects are on time and spend.
- Complete integrated management plans for the common land owned by the National Park Authority.
- Commence work on a new Local Plan to ensure that planning policy continues to respond effectively to the needs and emerging issues of the National Park.
- Improve and enhance the Authority's website and develop our social media platforms.
- Work with Dartmoor Futures to deliver the Energy Independence and Two Moors Way projects and support the charity in its role as a strategic convenor around a 'whole Dartmoor' approach and in its efforts to raise funds and investment to help deliver the vision in the Partnership Plan.
- Deliver programme of events and promotion to highlight and celebrate 75 years of Dartmoor National Park.
- Complete the implementation of a replacement IT Planning system and process review across the Development and Planning Policy Team.
- Develop a programme to encourage the involvement of more young people in the work of the Authority (Partnership Plan, governance and practical management).

Outcomes sought:

- A motivated and engaged workforce delivering high quality services that support National Park purposes – more than 80% of staff feeling engaged in the organisation (based on staff survey).
- A revised Dartmoor Partnership Plan that is supported by key partners with an agreed vision, clear delivery plan and governance structure to monitor delivery and actively promote the Plan.
- An Authority website that is used by more people to access information about the National Park and the services provided by the National Park.
- Dartmoor Futures supported as a key partner to help deliver the Dartmoor Partnership Plan vision.
- Capital programme that delivers sustainable and long-term benefit to the National Park and the Authority.
- Understanding and support for Dartmoor National Parks (through engagement online and donations through Donate for Dartmoor) following 75th celebration events and activities.
- An efficient and effective Planning service which exceeds National targets and is proactive in our communities.

Dartmoor Land Use Management Group (DLUMG)

The creation of the DLUMG was one of the major recommendations from the independent review of protected site management on Dartmoor commissioned by Defra Ministers in 2023 and chaired by David Fursdon. The Group's purpose is to reinforce Dartmoor's existing governance by promoting cooperation and collaboration between key stakeholders and government arm's length bodies (ALBs) with a focus on land management. The Group's remit covers the whole of the Dartmoor National Park and all relevant aspects of land-use within its boundaries. Its role in relation to the management of 'protected sites' includes ancient monuments and archaeology as well as ecological designations. In this way, DLUMG will facilitate the achievement of improved outcomes for nature and climate on Dartmoor, together with a wide range of other public benefits, in a resilient landscape that is underpinned by viable, sustainable, farm businesses.

The Authority is a member of the DLUMG and will be supporting it to deliver its terms of reference which include work on a data observatory, land use framework for Dartmoor and Dartmoor wide grazing and agri-environment schemes. The Authority is also acting as the 'banker' for the Group – it receives a ring-fenced grant from Defra which is the budget for the Group.

The work of the DLUMG is closely linked to many of the actions in the Authority's Business Plan. Progress by the DLUMG will be reported separately as the Group is independent of the Authority.

Dartmoor Futures

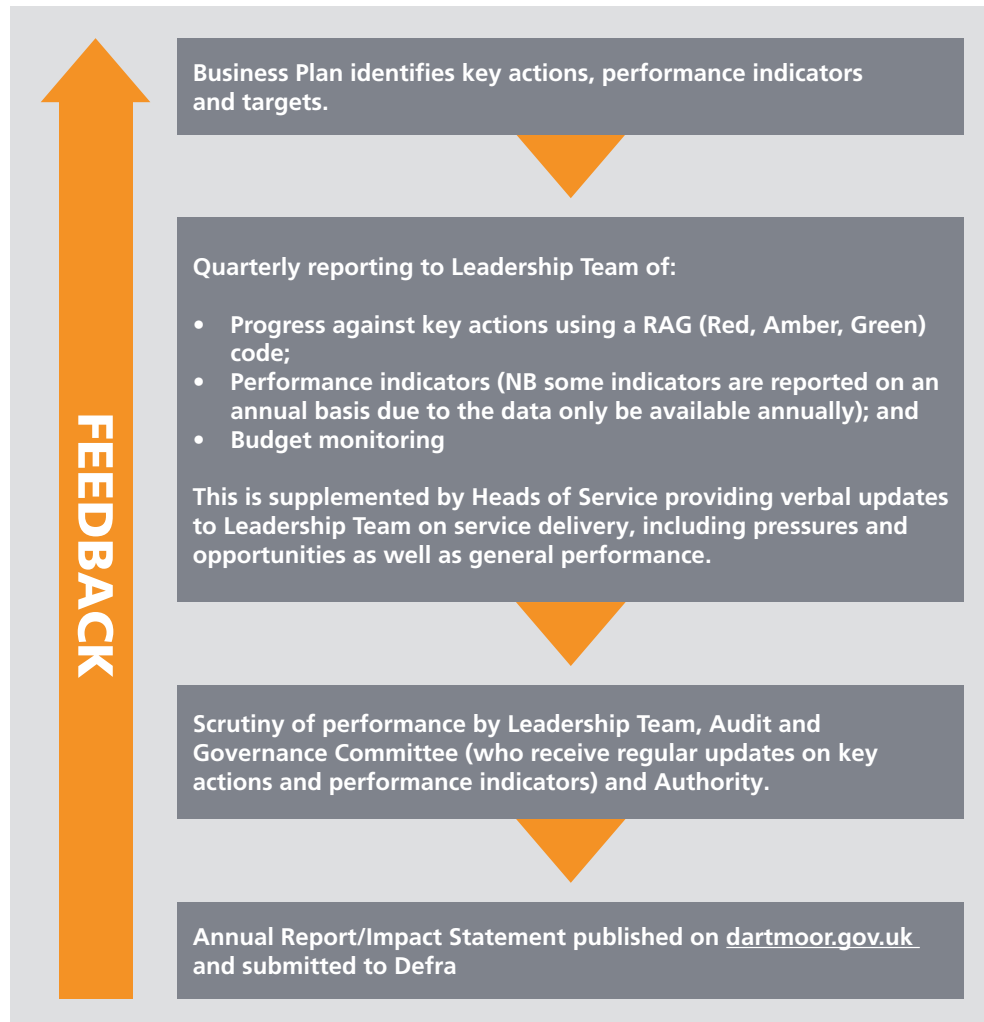
The Authority has supported the establishment of the Dartmoor Foundation (trading name Dartmoor Futures) as a limited company with charitable status. The Authority will work closely with Dartmoor Futures to help develop it as a key partner to deliver the Partnership Plan. Progress will be reported to the Authority.



Measuring progress

We continually seek ways to improve the quality and value for money of the services we provide.

The Authority's performance framework is summarised below:



Progress against key actions is monitored on a quarterly basis and reported to the Authority's Audit and Governance Committee.

At the end of each financial year, the Authority completes an annual performance review which contains information about the progress made in delivering the Business Plan, together with achievements against a comprehensive set of performance indicators. A copy of our latest Annual review can be accessed [here](#).

In addition the Authority reports separately on the Dartmoor Partnership Plan and produces a State of the Park report every five years.



Performance indicators

The key Performance Indicators that we will use to assess service delivery are identified below together with the associated target

Spatial Planning	Target
Percentage of major applications determined within 13 weeks	50%
Percentage of minor applications determined within 8 weeks	65%
Percentage of other applications determined within 8 weeks	85%
Percentage of pre-applications for minor and householder applications which have been concluded within 42 days	70%
Percentage of pre-applications for major applications which have been concluded within 56 days	70%
Percentage of applications validated within 5 working days	70%
Percentage of applications registered within 5 working days	70%
Number of live enforcement cases	150
Number of enforcement cases received	No target - trend/baseline data
Number of legal notices issued (EN, LBEN, BoCN, s215, etc.)	No target - trend/baseline data
Number of enforcement cases closed	No target - trend/baseline data
Number of enforcement related applications received (retrospective)	No target - trend/baseline data
Number of appeals received (planning & enforcement)	No target - trend/baseline data
Percentage of appeals allowed	30%
Number of affordable housing units granted planning permission	65

Performance indicators

Conservation & Communities	Target
Percentage of public rights of way network that is easy to use	90%
Total number of unresolved maintenance issues on the public rights of way network	Reduce by 10% per annum
Number of maintenance issues resolved by the Authority on the public rights of way network	600
User behaviour engagements that result in positive change	80%
Number of visitors to the National Park Visitor Centres	125,000
Number of engagement events delivered on Dartmoor and number of attendees	150 events/10,000 attendees
Number of engagement events attended/delivered beyond the National Park and number of attendees	
Percentage of engagement events attended/delivered on and off Dartmoor, reaching attendees on Index of Multiple Deprivation scale 1-3	10%
Number of followers on social media	110,000
Number of subscribers to e-communications	5,000
Percentage of e-communications opened by subscribers	48%
Number of unique visitors to Authority website and page views	300,000 total users 500,000 page views
Proportion of Farming in Protected Landscapes budget committed and spent	100%

Performance indicators

Corporate Services	Target
Employee sickness absence	6 days per FTE 3 days (excluding long-term)
Employee turnover	10%
Employee appraisals	95%
Total number of volunteer days organised or supported by the Authority	4,000
Value of volunteer days organised or supported by the Authority	£400,000
No. of volunteer days attended by under-represented groups	400
No. of formal complaints received and number of formal complaints upheld by Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman	No target - trend/baseline data
Spend per visitor in National Park Visitor Centres	£2.00
Percentage of income derived from sources other than National Park Grant	50%
Percentage change in carbon dioxide equivalent emissions from DNPA operations	42% emissions reduction scope 1 and 2 and 25% emissions reduction scope 3 by 2030 which equates to a total reduction target of 438 tonnes Co2e
Percentage of Membership attending Authority meetings	85%
Number of parish meetings attended by Members	53
Number of parish meetings attended by Rangers and other officers	53
Retail Gross Profit	45%

Funding

Our core funding comes from central Government, not from Council Tax. This reflects the fact that, unlike local councils, our responsibilities extend to people who live well beyond our boundaries.

The approved budget for 2026/27 is based on a total expenditure of £8,773,900 of which £1,453,837 is capital money. The capital grant provides an opportunity for the Authority, but also a considerable challenge to ensure expenditure meets eligible spend by 31 March 2027.

The Defra revenue grant accounts for 48% of projected revenue expenditure in 2026/27.

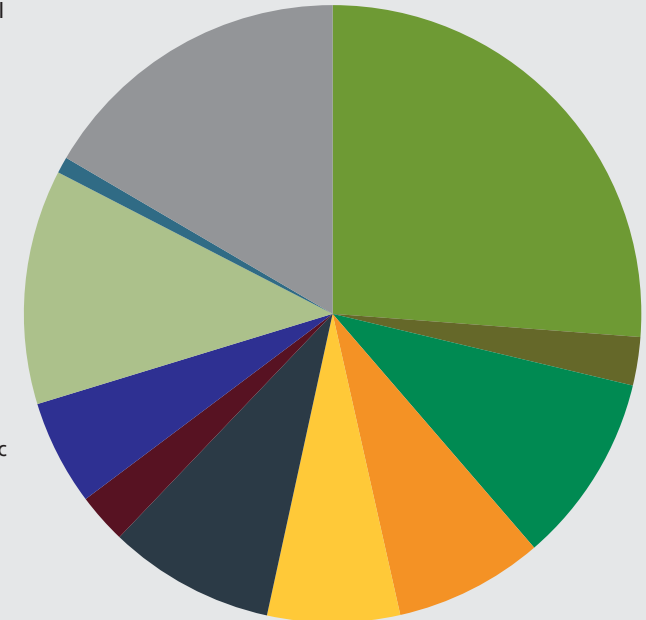


Sources of Funding 2024/25

Source of Funding	£
NPG (Defra)	3,532,028
Reserves	528,290
Income	835,582
Other Grants	2,424,163
Total Revenue Funds	7,320,063
Capital funding (Defra)	1,453,837
Total of All Funds Available	8,773,900

Projected Expenditure 2026/27

- Conservation of Natural Environment **26.2%**
- Conservation of Cultural Heritage **2.5%**
- Recreation Management **9.9%**
- Promoting Understanding **7.8%**
- Rangers, Estates & Volunteers **6.9%**
- Development Management **8.7%**
- Forward Planning **2.6%**
- Corporate & Democratic Core **5.5%**
- Premises & Support Services **12.4%**
- Project Fund **0.9%**
- Capital **16.6%**





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